

TOWN OF DAVIE
TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM/PHONE: Judy Paul, Mayor/954-797-1030

PREPARED BY: Kristi Caravella, Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator

SUBJECT: Resolution

AFFECTED DISTRICT: Townwide

ITEM REQUEST: **Schedule for Council Meeting**

TITLE OF AGENDA ITEM: A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF DAVIE, FLORIDA, REQUESTING THE ASSISTANCE OF GOVERNOR CRIST AND FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY KOPELOUSOS TO PRIORITIZE THE INTERCITY RAIL COMPONENT OF THE FEC CORRIDOR PROJECT (FROM JACKSONVILLE TO MIAMI) AS PART OF THE FEDERAL ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA

REPORT IN BRIEF: This project would enable Amtrak to operate passenger train services on the Florida East Coast (FEC) Corridor between Jacksonville and Miami. Reintroducing passenger service on the FEC Corridor has been a high priority project for Amtrak and the Florida Department of Transportation since 2000. Town Council has encouraged the creation of a balanced and integrated transportation system with a strong emphasis on regional mass transit system and this project helps achieve this goal. This resolution asks Governor Crist and FDOT Secretary Kopelousos to prioritize the Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project (from Jacksonville to Miami) as part of the Federal Economic Stimulus Package for the State of Florida.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS:

CONCURRENCES:

FISCAL IMPACT: not applicable

Has request been budgeted? n/a

If yes, expected cost: \$

Account name and number:

If no, amount needed: \$

What account name and number will funds be appropriated from:

Additional Comments:

RECOMMENDATION(S): Motion to approve resolution

Attachment(s): Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council Memorandum – Staff Analysis

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF DAVIE, FLORIDA,
REQUESTING THE ASSISTANCE OF GOVERNOR CRIST AND
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY
KOPELOUSOS TO PRIORITIZE THE INTERCITY RAIL
COMPONENT OF THE FEC CORRIDOR PROJECT (FROM
JACKSONVILLE TO MIAMI) AS PART OF THE FEDERAL
ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA

WHEREAS, the FEC corridor was historically operated as a passenger rail line
along Florida's east coast, traversing or providing rail connections to urban areas like the
Town of Davie; and

WHEREAS, Florida's east coast historically developed around train stations
along the FEC railroad; and

WHEREAS, local governments and the private sector along Florida's east coast
are currently implementing programs to redevelop historic downtowns built around train
stations; and

WHEREAS, improved mobility is highly desired in the Town of Davie and throughout the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, transit, including rail transit, is a key component of improved mobility, especially between cities and throughout the Florida's east coast; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak is well-suited to provide passenger rail service along Florida's east coast; and

WHEREAS, the reintroduction of Amtrak service along Florida's east coast would provide near-term jobs and economic stimulus for Florida's residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government is seeking appropriate projects for inclusion in the Federal economic stimulus package to provide immediate and near-term job opportunities for projects; and

WHEREAS, the Intercity FEC Corridor Project (Jacksonville/Miami) is an appropriate project for inclusion by the State of Florida in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan; and

WHEREAS, former work by Amtrak and FDOT includes plans for the improvements necessary to initiate Amtrak service on the FEC corridor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF DAVIE, FLORIDA.

SECTION 1. The Town of Davie requests the assistance of Governor Crist and FDOT Secretary Kopelousos to prioritize the Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project (from Jacksonville to Miami) as part of the Federal economic stimulus package for the State of Florida.

SECTION 2. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage and adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 2009

MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBER

ATTEST:

TOWN CLERK

APPROVED THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 2009

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members AGENDA ITEM 7

From: Staff

Date: March 20, 2009 Council Meeting

Subject: Resolution Supporting the Inclusion of the Intercity Rail Component of the Florida East Coast (FEC) Corridor Project as part of Florida's Economic Stimulus Plan

Introduction

The purpose of this item is to have Council adopt a resolution supporting the inclusion of the Intercity Rail component of the FEC Corridor Project (from Jacksonville to Miami) as part of Florida's economic stimulus plan. The project would enable Amtrak to operate passenger train service on the FEC Corridor between Jacksonville and Miami. Reintroducing passenger service on the FEC Corridor has been a high priority for Council since the early 1990s. The Strategic Regional Policy Plan encourages the creation of a balanced and integrated transportation system, with strong emphasis on a regional mass transit system. Since 1994, Council has adopted a number of resolutions supporting passenger transit on the FEC, within the Region and beyond, to complement on-going redevelopment efforts, improve mobility, and expand economic development opportunities (see Attachments A, B, C). Council's Model Economic Stimulus Project list included as part of the staff report to Council for the February 20, 2009 meeting specifically includes putting passenger rail service back on the FEC as an initiative that should be funded (see Attachment D).

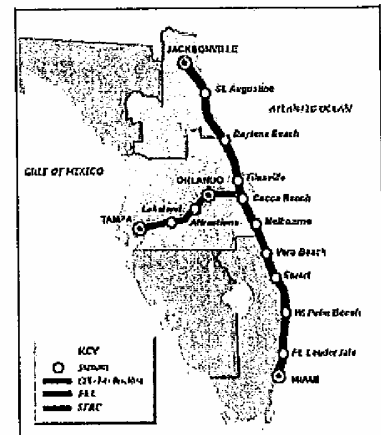
Background

In early 2000, Amtrak, FEC, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and regional authorities agreed to a service concept to reintroduce passenger rail along Florida's east coast on the FEC Corridor. Thirteen preliminary station locations, primarily in downtowns, were identified between Jacksonville and West Palm Beach, including Stuart, Fort Pierce, and Vero Beach. The new Amtrak long-distance service was anticipated to utilize existing FEC tracks, with limited additional track sidings as needed. An interconnection in West Palm Beach between the FEC and Chessie and Seaboard (CSX) tracks would be required to accomplish Amtrak service south to Miami. This general alignment is included in the 2006 Florida Rail Plan, which was developed by the FDOT, as a potential "East Coast Route" for long distance and new corridor rail service (carrier unspecified), and illustrated in the map

graphic titled “Figure 5.6 Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service Vision Plan ~ Coastal Route” (identified in blue on the map).

Negotiations were nearly completed between Amtrak, FDOT, and the FEC. However, in 2002, the Federal government directed Amtrak to suspend negotiations pending revisions to Amtrak’s budget and debt structure. It is Council’s understanding the Federal loan provisions have been satisfied, and Amtrak began investigating new service alignments last year. In 2008, Amtrak’s budget was nearly doubled to \$13 Billion over five years (2009 through 2014), allowing the carrier to better expand its operations. The January 2009 economic stimulus legislation directs an additional \$8 Billion to states specifically to develop new corridor and long distance services and is being acted upon by states across the country.

Figure 5.6 Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service Vision Plan: Coastal Route



Analysis

Council discussions with Amtrak representatives indicate the Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project (Jacksonville to Miami) could be an appropriate project for Florida to request as part of the Federal economic stimulus package termed the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan.” New long distance and intercity corridor service would complement on-going efforts in southeastern Florida, such as the current Tri-Rail service or potential new service to be recommended by the South Florida East Coast Corridor (SFECC) Study. The SFECC study is evaluating new service in the 85-mile FEC segment in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties.

The cost to carry out the Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project is estimated to be approximately \$100 million. It should be noted that an Amtrak project would compete for a different source of Federal funding than either Tri-Rail or the SFECC project (Federal Railroad Administration funding versus Federal Transit Administration funding). Further, a Jacksonville/Miami Amtrak project would likely include an interconnection between the FEC and CSX tracks in Palm Beach County, which could shift this capital expense away from a future SFECC-recommended service, thereby improving the cost/benefit ratio for a Palm Beach/Miami FEC service.

Conclusion

The reintroduction of passenger transit on the FEC Corridor throughout the Region is an important component of the successful and sustainable redevelopment of the Region. The reintroduction of passenger transit on the FEC Corridor has been a high priority of the Council for nearly two decades. As part of a larger state-wide transit system, expanded Amtrak service could provide enhanced inter- and intra-regional mobility as well as

economic development in coastal cities. Amtrak's regional rail service would complement the existing Tri-Rail service (commuter rail) as well as the intensive service proposed on the FEC Corridor in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade. Recent discussions with Amtrak representatives suggest good potential for this project to be advanced if included as part of Florida's request for Federal economic stimulus money.

Moving this project forward will require the State of Florida to include the Intercity FEC Corridor Project (Jacksonville/Miami) as part of its Federal economic stimulus request. The request should be initiated by FDOT, and Council should promote support among the Region's Legislative and Congressional delegation, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) and affected local governments along the FEC Corridor. If needed, Council staff would be available to assist with gathering land use, economic, and other relevant data as well as coordination with FDOT, the SFRTA, and other agencies as necessary. Council draft Resolution 09-04 which supports making this request, is included with this staff report.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council: 1) adopt Resolution 09-04 supporting the inclusion of the Intercity FEC Corridor Project (Jacksonville/Miami) as part of Florida's request for Federal economic stimulus money; 2) transmit the resolution to the Governor, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, and Florida's Legislative and Congressional delegation; and 3) transmit the resolution to FDOT District 4, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, and affected local governments along the Florida East Coast Railway Corridor, with a request to adopt similar resolutions of support.

Attachments